

Community Development Advisory Committee Minutes

Date: February 16, 2016

Member Attendees:

Ms. JoAnne Hanrahan Mayoral Appointee, Chair
Ms. Sharyon Gardiner Mayoral Appointee, Vice Chair
Ms. Mary Ann Callahan, 1st District, Secretary
Mr. John Young, 2nd District
Mr. Sean Massey, 3rd District
Ms. Majeedah Razzaq, 4th District
Ms. Jen O'Brien, 5th District
Mr. Jerry Kunkle 7th District
Ms. Debra Hogan, Mayoral App.

Staff Members Attending:

Mr. Stephen Carson, Grants Administrator

Public Attendees:

None

Meeting called to order: 6:02 PM by the Chair

1. Agency Presentations:

a. City of Binghamton Department of Economic Development, Director Mr. Robert Murphy

Mr. Murphy reviewed the activities of the revenue sources for the Department, providing program overviews. See Attachment B In addition to the information provided on the hand outs, Mr. Murphy provided details regarding issues such as the demand for residential and restaurant space in Downtown Binghamton. He mentioned several new business ventures such as the coffee shop where the former Portfolio restaurant had been and a BLDC outreach initiative for a benefit concert for the VINES project and a kosher dairy production plant producing cottage cheese intended for downstate markets. He also addressed a new “nano” loan initiative featuring a more user friendly application process designed to provide loans under \$5,000 for new businesses. The goal is to address the lack of minority owned

businesses in the City. Mr. Murphy also discussed the BLDC bike rack contest, and the placement of the winning bike rack designs outside the Courthouse and on Chenango St.

Chairwoman Hanrahan requested the actual funding figure to be requested for the 2016-2017 fiscal year. Mr. Murphy indicated it would be approximately \$153,000 and that actual figures would be forthcoming. Mr. Massey inquired into the existence of an agency that assisted minority owned businesses. It was thought that an entrepreneurial assistance program sponsored by Binghamton University did exist. It was further stated that some sort of assistance by the Economic Development Department would be useful because of the often onerous application process. Ms. Hogan inquired into the landscaping of the Commercial Alley. Mr. Murphy responded that there were plans to do work that would not only beautify by helping to camouflage such things as restaurant air conditioners, but allow utilization of the space for various events. Ms. Hogan further inquired into the possibility of the Arts Council securing a nano loan to work on the space in question. Mr. Murphy stated he would look into the matter.

The Binghamton Police Department, Chief Robert Zikuski was scheduled to present, but the committee was informed that that Chief would not be able to do so. After some discussion regarding alternate presentation dates and methods that would allow the Police request to be made prior to the first Public Hearing, it was decided that Chief Zikuski would meet with the Committee at 6 PM, March 7th before the next scheduled meeting, which is a Public Hearing to be held in City Council Chambers. The Committee will meet the Chief in the Planning Department conference room. Because of the presentation by the Police Department, the Public Hearing will be scheduled for 6:30 on March 7th.

2. Certifying Minutes

- a. CDAC Secretary, Mary Ann Callahan, approved the minutes presented to the members
- b. Voting to certify minutes was taken and was unanimous

3. Outreach Discussion

Ms. Hogan asked what the outreach procedure was for the Public Hearing. Mr. Carson indicated that the Planning Department would be sending out press releases, advertisements in local newspapers, flyer in

such public places as the Public Library and relevant agencies that would include CDBG funded and others who might have interest, as well as places of business, where allowed. Ms. Hogan expressed concern regarding whether the process was adequate, asking whether the hearing could be discussed on local radio. Mr. Carson indicated that the City would not grant permission for such an outreach. Ms. Hogan then suggested that in her opinion, it was necessary to encourage new input regarding the Block Grant process, suggesting that such avenues as the Penny Saver might also be employed, along with a CDAC subcommittee focusing on outreach. Ms. Hanrahan stated that it was her understanding that Ms. Hogan and Ms. Barrera, who is no longer a member, has been designated to form such a subcommittee. Since Ms. Barrera is no longer on the CDAC, it was suggested that Ms. Hogan work with Mr. Carson to see what additional outreach activities might be done and bring that information back to the Committee. It was also stated that any new outreach needed to begin well ahead of any Public Hearing and that perhaps some efforts could be effected for the second hearing scheduled for May. Mr. Massey concurred, stating that the CDAC should employ best practices regarding outreach and that perhaps social media would be an option. He asked whether Blue Print Binghamton could be utilized, Mr. Carson responded saying he would reach out not only to Blue Print Binghamton but the front page of the City of Binghamton website and the Binghamton phone app as well. Mr. Kunkle added his support for an effective outreach so that the public can see what is being done with Block Grant funds. Ms. Gardiner asked if one very effective communique could be created so that the message sent out would be a unified one. After further discussion, it was the general consensus that a more expanded outreach would be looked into for the May Public Hearing after Ms. Hogan and Mr. Carson bring their findings to the committee. Mr. Massey further reiterated his view that the committee should do as much outreach to the public as it possibly can. He suggested that each committee member could contact his/her council person. It was further decided that Ms. Hanrahan, as Chair, would send an e mail to the City Council Chair.

4. Fair Housing Set Aside

The Fair Housing training set aside, with an information sheet provided by Mr. Carson, was then discussed. See Attachment C. Mr. Carson stated that it has been determined that Fair Housing

training for both landlords and tenants is warranted. Ms. Gardiner asked about a discrepancy on the sheet, on which training funds are listed in one section as \$3,000 and another as \$5,000. Mr. Carson responded that in his experience, even though the initial figure quoted was \$3,000, it might be closer to the \$5,000 figure, so both were listed. Discussion then ensued regarding tenants' rights and remedies, as well as the need to educate landlords on the most current laws.

5. Thank You Letter

A thank you letter from Councilman Scaringi was distributed to the members. See Attachment D

6. Status of CDAC Member Appointments Update

- a. Ms. Jen O'Brien has been appointed to fill the 5th District seat by Councilman Papastrat
- b. Ms. Pam Post has resigned and a new appointment for that seat was to be discussed at the next City Council meeting
- c. The Council At-Large Position is currently vacant.
- d. Mr. Carson passed out a list of members phone numbers and reminded the group that new members will need to submit disclosure sheets and that all current members, save Ms. Hogan, have already submitted theirs.

Adjournment

- a. After a motion was made by Mr. Kunkle and seconded by Ms. Gardiner was approved unanimously, the meeting adjourned at 7: 25 PM